



Permits for Archeological Investigations

4. Information for Managers

Introduction

This section describes the responsibilities of the NPS regional directors and park managers in issuing and monitoring Permits for Archeological Investigations (hereafter referred to as a "Permit") on national parklands.

A Permit is required for any archeological investigations carried out on parklands by non-NPS personnel, unless carried out under a contract or a cooperative agreement specifically written for archeological investigations. Permits are issued under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA) or the Antiquities Act of 1906 or both. Research projects on archeological resources that are 50-100 years old are issued Permits under the Antiquities Act. Research projects on archeological resources that are greater than 100 years old are issued Permits under ARPA.

The Permit is a legal document that spells out the nature and location of the archeological research that is permitted, the manner in which the research is to be conducted, and under what conditions the project can be suspended. Thus, the Permit can be, and is, used in court to establish elements of cultural resource laws violations, should they occur.

Regional directors issue these permits based on the recommendations of park managers and NPS archeologists. The park manager is responsible for activities occurring within park boundaries and works closely with archeologists in the park or regional center to review proposed projects and permit applications.

NPS Managers: When is a Permit Necessary?

When a Permit is needed

A Permit is required for any archeological investigation by non-NPS personnel occurring on parklands, regardless of whether or not these investigations are linked to regulatory compliance (for example, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) ([16 USC 470 et seq.](#)) or the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) ([42 USC 4321-4327](#)). Archeological investigations that require permits include excavation, shovel-testing, coring, pedestrian survey (with and without removal of artifacts), underwater archeology, photogrammetry, and rock art documentation. Individuals, academic and scientific institutions, museums, and businesses that propose to conduct archeological field investigations on parklands must first obtain a Permit before the project may begin.

The park manager is responsible for ensuring that proposed activities comply with federal laws and regulations that protect archeological resources before issuing other types of permits, leases, licenses, or entitlements. When a park manager authorizes a third party activity without considering the effects of that activity on archeological resources, the manager may be in violation of ARPA, NHPA, or other laws.

A regional director also may issue a Permit to the governor of any state, or to a designee that the governor deems qualified to carry out the intent of ARPA, for purposes of conducting archeological research, excavating and/or removing archeological resources, and safeguarding and preserving any materials and data collected by a university, museum, or other scientific or educational institution approved by the federal land manager (43 CFR 7.5 (b)(5)).

When a Permit is not needed

A Permit is not required in every situation that potentially involves archeological resources (see 43 CFR 7.5 (b)). In general:

- Permits are not required for any person conducting NPS-authorized activities on parklands when those activities are for purposes other than the excavation and/or removal of archeological resources, even though those activities might accidentally result in the disturbance of archeological resources. This does not, however, affect the park manager's responsibility to comply with other authorities (such as NHPA, NEPA, ARPA, and the NPS Organic Act) that protect archeological resources, prior to issuing the authorization to conduct those activities (43 CFR 7.5 (b)(1)).
- A Permit is not required for the collection, for private purposes, of any rock, coin, bullet, or mineral from park lands that is not defined as an archeological resource, provided that such collection does not result in the disturbance of an archeological site (43 CFR 7.5(b)(2)). Collectors who wish to collect gold or silver coins or bullion from parklands, however, need to obtain a contract for collection from General Services Administration (GSA) (See Treasure Trove).
- A Permit is not required for NPS archeologists or non-NPS archeologists carrying out archeological activities on parklands under contract or through a cooperative agreement with the NPS (43 CFR 7.5 (b)(4)).
- However, the land manager must ensure that:
 - Natural and cultural resource laws compliance requirements are met.
 - NPS archeologists and non-NPS archeologists working on behalf of the NPS meet the provisions of ARPA Regulations Sections 7.8 and 7.9 (43 CFR 7.8 and 7.9); regarding professional standards and training, and that investigations, reporting, and curation of collected archeological materials also comply with ARPA requirements (see Permit Conditions 15.i).
 - The appropriate tribal authorities have been notified of potential harm or destruction to sites of religious or cultural importance to Indian tribes (43 CFR 7.7); (43 CFR 10.3).

- Reports that are submitted by NPS archeologists are reviewed for compliance with the provisions of the park's management plan by the park manager or peer reviewed, whichever is more suitable or practical.
- All pertinent archeological site information is collected and entered into the Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS) in a timely manner and is complete, accurate, and reliable.
- All material remains and associated records are cataloged with NPS ANCS+ in a timely manner.

NPS Managers: Reviewing Permit Applications

The Permit application is submitted in writing to the office of the regional director. If submitted to park personnel, the application is forwarded to the regional director. The regional director acknowledges receipt of an application in writing. When the Permit application describes a project to be carried out on NPS land and other federal land with which the NPS shares a boundary, the NPS regional director coordinates the issuance of a Permit with the other land managing agency (7.8 (b)).

The NPS regional director also ensures that Native American tribal authorities are notified at least 30 days prior to issuing the a Permit for investigation of any significant cultural or religious sites, and that any requested consultations have taken place (43 CFR 7.7 (a)).

The regional director may delegate technical review of the permit application to the park or other NPS archeologist. For issues relating to curation and handling of material remains and associated records, NPS curators may also be included. The regional director consults with the park or other NPS archeologist and the park manager about project feasibility. A Permit may be denied if the application does not meet Permit requirements (See 43 CFR 7.8 Issuance of Permits).

The decision to issue a Permit is made by the regional director. Before issuing a Permit, the regional director verifies that:

- The applicant is appropriately qualified, as evidenced by training, education, and/or experience, and possesses demonstrable appropriate competence.
- The proposed work is to be undertaken for the purpose of furthering archeological knowledge in the public interest.
- The proposed work, including time, scope, location, and purpose, is not inconsistent with any management plan or established policy, objectives, or requirements applicable to the management of the park.
- Written consent has been obtained for work proposed on state, tribal, or other federal agency lands managed by the NPS.
- Necessary compliance with cultural resource laws and regulations is addressed.
- A plan for documentation of newly discovered sites and revisited sites, including new or updated ASMIS records, is provided.

- Written confirmation has been obtained from the curatorial facility that will accept the resulting collections and associated records.
- Written confirmation has been obtained that the curatorial facility is in compliance, or working toward compliance, with provisions of regulations for federally-owned and administered archeological collections (36 CFR 79).
- The applicant has confirmed that, not later than 90 days after the date that the final report has been submitted to the NPS, all material remains and associated records resulting from work conducted under the requested Permit will be delivered to the curatorial facilities as named in the Permit application (Permit Form, Standard Permit Conditions, 15 v, w).

If the archeological project is anticipated to impact a site that is listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or if the project involves archeological excavations, compliance with Section 106 of NHPA or NEPA is required. The regional director or the regional director's appointed delegate will consult with the appropriate historic preservation officer(s) about compliance requirements. If compliance procedures are required, the applicant will be requested to prepare background documentation.

If necessary, the regional director verifies that the leadership of affected Indian tribes have been notified of possible effect on sites having religious or cultural importance. Tribes have 30 days to respond to the notification (43 CFR 7.7). Depending on the response, further consultation may be required that may affect the timing and conditions of the issuance of the Permit. Regional directors may require applicants to participate in consultations.

Regional directors have 60 days to review a Permit application. If there are special circumstances, or in the event of disasters, a Permit can be issued immediately to help protect and preserve archeological resources.

If the application does not meet qualifications and standards for issuing a Permit for Archeological Investigations, the regional director must deny the application for a Permit in writing. Depending on the nature of the denial, such as a conflict with other events in the park, or because of an incomplete application, the regional director may invite the applicant to submit a revised proposal. If the research proposal conflicts with the park's management plan, the regional director will not encourage the applicant to re-submit an application. The regional director must send copies to the park manager of all letters to the applicant.

NPS Managers: Issuing a Permit

The regional director prepares the Permit and consults the park or other NPS archeologist and the park manager regarding appropriate terms and conditions for conducting fieldwork, including dates; and responsibilities and schedule for monitoring fieldwork and laboratory activities. Standard conditions and any special conditions are listed on the Permit. The regional director ensures that the terms and conditions relating to the interests and concerns of affiliated Indian tribes about archeological resources affected by the work were considered in developing the final scope of work (43 CFR 7.7; 43 CFR 10.3).

The [Permit form](#) is available on InsideNPS.

To prepare a Permit, the following information is required from the applicant:

- The name(s) of the qualified individual(s) responsible for conducting the work and the name(s) of the qualified individuals responsible for carrying out the terms and conditions of the Permit;
- The scope of the project
 - Description of the purpose, nature, and extent of the work proposed, including how and why it is proposed to be conducted (include research design, methods, collecting strategy, curation plan, and reporting plan);
 - The location of the project;
 - The nature and extent of work that is allowed under the Permit, including the beginning and ending dates of the fieldwork, dates of submission of ASMIS and ANCS+ data, and submission dates for preliminary and final reports;
- The name of the park repository or qualified non-federal repository where any collected materials, data, and associated records will be deposited;
- Any procedures that are to be followed in the event that Native American human remains are discovered.

The Permit will stipulate:

- Requirements for compliance with NHPA, NEPA, or other federal authorities, if needed.
- The number of reports or products of the project and the deadlines for submission of draft and final products (This includes ASMIS records, or field data to create ASMIS records, and ANCS+ records);
- Any terms and conditions requested by tribes and agreed to by the NPS;
- Any terms and conditions requested by states and agreed to by the NPS;
- Terms and conditions to protect public safety, or to limit work areas or activities to those consistent with legitimate land uses (such conditions may also be considered under other NPS permits);
- Requirements to restore lands to the satisfaction of the NPS park manager upon completion of the fieldwork;
- Additional terms and conditions listed in the Special Conditions Permit stipulations as required by the park manager and regional director:
 - The park manager ensures that concerns of park personnel are incorporated in the scope of work;
 - Regional directors and managers may require applicants to participate in consultations with tribal, state, or other authorities.
- Plans for Discovery of Human Remains: A written plan of action is required in the event that there is an inadvertent discovery of Native American human remains, intentional excavations of Native American human remains, or both ([NPS Cultural Resource Management Guideline](#)).

Appendix R). The park manager will provide any existing park-specific plans for the inadvertent discovery or intentional excavation of human remains.

The regional director or a person designated by the regional director sends the original Permit to the applicant, a copy to the park manager where the research project will take place, and retains a copy for the regional director's files.

NPS Managers: NPS Inspections

The regional director is responsible for ensuring that inspections occur during the field and laboratory phases of a permitted project to determine whether the project is in compliance with stipulations of the Permit. These inspections are conducted by NPS archeologists and, when appropriate and feasible, an NPS curator. During the inspection, the NPS archeologist verifies that:

- A copy of the Permit is on site at all times;
- Responsible parties identified in the Permit are present and are performing the roles identified in the Permit;
- The investigators are maintaining accurate field documentation, including ASMIS data and locational data, preferably in GPS;
- The investigators are maintaining a photographic log containing information on each photograph taken, including full provenience information, date, and aspect;
- The investigators are maintaining a field specimen log;
- The investigators are drafting a series of maps containing detailed information on the location of archeological investigations, the location of individual archeological test units, significant profiles, and floor plans;
- The investigators are maintaining provenience integrity by placing associated objects into common containers, and separating objects of different provenience into separate containers, all of which are clearly marked.
- Compliance requirements established through consultation with the SHPO or ACHP are being addressed.
- The activities are in compliance with other NPS permits.

The appointed NPS archeologist, and when appropriate or feasible, an NPS curator should also monitor project-related laboratory activities. Laboratory inspection includes verification that all of the NPS standards for collections management outlined in Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections (36 CFR Part 79) and the NPS Museum Handbook, and other NPS region-specific guidelines are met to ensure proper management and security of the collection.

If park personnel observe activities at variance with the terms and conditions of the Permit, the individual reports their findings immediately to the park manager. The park manager provides the regional director with the information necessary to suspend the Permit and all associated activities

in writing in a timely manner. The regional director has authority for suspension or revocation of Permits (see [Enforcement, Suspension, and Revocation of Permits](#)).

NPS Managers: Discovery of Human Remains

If human remains are discovered, either during excavation or survey, the plan developed by the park to respond to these circumstances is followed. If no plan exists, the permittee ceases all work and immediately notifies the park manager of the discovery. Work stoppage is specific to the area where the human remains are encountered.

Native American Human Remains

Whenever possible, parks should enter into general agreements with culturally affiliated Indian tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations that have claimed, or are likely to claim, Native American human remains and other cultural items that are intentionally excavated or inadvertently discovered within the park unit. Such agreements are useful in streamlining and managing the consultation process so that communication is efficient and timely in the event of a discovery of Native American human remains in the park unit ([NPS Cultural Resource Management Guideline, Appendix R](#)). These comprehensive agreements are the basis for the Plan for Intentional Excavation of Native American Human Remains, and the Plan for Inadvertent Discovery of Native American Human Remains that, if relevant, are a standard condition of the issued permit.

If excavation of Native American human remains during the permitted project was anticipated, the Permittee will follow the procedures outlined in the written Plan for Intentional Excavation of Human Remains provided in the Permit. Project work may continue in accordance with the written programmatic plan previously formulated by the park unit in consultation with Native American tribes and made a part of the conditions of the Permit.

If the discovery of Native American human remains during the permitted project was not anticipated, the permittee will follow procedures outlined in the Plan for Unanticipated Discovery of Native American Human Remains provided in the Permit.

In the absence of a programmatic plan, permitted activities may be resumed 30 days after tribes have been notified ([25 U.S.C. 3002\(d\)](#)). During the 30 day work stoppage, permittees should coordinate their activities with NPS in order to avoid harm to Native American human remains and other cultural items that are protected under [NAGPRA \(25 U.S.C.3001, Definitions\)](#).

If, as part of an excavation or inadvertent discovery, Native American human remains or NAGPRA-related items are disinterred, scientific archeological methods, techniques, analyses, and reports are conducted as required by ARPA and Section 3 of NAGPRA ([NPS Cultural Resource Management Guideline, Appendix R](#)).

Non-Native American Human Remains

If the human remains are determined to be non-Native American, NAGPRA does not apply. In that case, the park manager will confer with law enforcement officials, the county or State coroner, and/or the medical examiner to determine the appropriate course of action. As the location of the human remains is a potential crime scene, the permittee ceases all work immediately upon discovery, and does not begin work again until notified by the park manager.

NPS Managers: Reports and Products

The regional director is responsible for ensuring that all deliverables conform with the Permit terms and conditions. Fulfilling this responsibility will be based on reviews and recommendations from the park or other NPS archeologist who has monitored the Permitted project. Upon completion of the project and after all reports and/or products, such as field forms, ASMIS site records, or the field data to create ASMIS site records, have been submitted and accepted, the regional director sends a letter to the applicant and park manager stating that the conditions of the Permit have been met.

Results of archeological investigations on parklands must be accessible to a broad range of users, including federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, the professional community, and the general public. Results must be communicated in reports that summarize the objectives, methods, techniques, and research results. Information relating to curation, such as any on-site conservation of items, ANCS+ catalog records, name of the curatorial repository, and collection accession numbers should also be included in the final report in order that additional detailed information can be obtained, if necessary. Information about specific site locations and other site information that would endanger the integrity of the archeological resource, if generally available, should be reported in a manner that allows the park manager to withhold that information.

Results that include the discovery of new archeological sites and revisiting existing archeological sites must be entered into ASMIS as complete, accurate, and reliable site records. Data entry must be done in a timely fashion for national level reporting under the Government Performance and Results Act. Results are also reported for the NPS Annual Report, which is subject to the auditing process for archeological sites as heritage assets as part of the NPS annual Financial Statements. The park manager is responsible for the timely entry of newly discovered sites and withdrawals of destroyed sites each year. Material remains must be cataloged using ANCS+.

Preliminary Reports

Within 6 weeks of completion of the field component of the research project, the permittee must submit a preliminary report to the regional director. The report should describe the fieldwork, including accomplishments, methods used to accomplish the work, names of individuals that carried out the fieldwork, maps, any GPS data, completed ASMIS forms for any newly recorded archeological sites, and any professional recommendations.

When a fieldwork episode involved only minor work and/or minor findings, a final report may be submitted in place of the preliminary report.

Annual Reports

In the event that the Permit extends for more than 1 year, the NPS requires an annual progress report by the permittee. The report must detail the extent of work accomplished to date, and how much work remains to be carried out. The Permit will be reviewed on a yearly basis following the submission of the annual report to ensure that the project is meeting deadlines and goals (43 CFR 7.9(g).)

Final Reports

Standard permit conditions require that within 6 months of completion of the field component of the research project, the permittee must submit a final report for review by the regional director. The applicant is advised to submit a draft report ahead of time, and allow time for revisions based on reviews by NPS personnel. If analysis is expected to take longer than six months, the regional director may authorize an extension for submission of the final report.

The final report must be consistent with information in field notes, photographs, and other materials (see the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archeological Documentation and 36 CFR 79 for additional guidance) and include:

- Description of the study area;
- Relevant historical documentation/background research;
- Research design;
- Field studies as actually implemented, including any deviation from the research design and the reason for the changes;
- Field observations, including the number of new sites that are discovered and identified sites that are revisited;
- Analyses and results, illustrated as appropriate with tables, charts, photographs, and graphs;
- Evaluation of the investigation in terms of the goals and objectives of the investigation;
- Recommendations for updating interpretive and management materials;
- Recommendations for on-going or proposed treatment activities, such as structural documentation, stabilization, etc.;
- Name and location of facility curating material remains and associated records; and
- Accession numbers.

If the actual research methods differed from those proposed, the reasons for these differences should be included in the report.

The final report is a public document and cannot be copyrighted. Information compiled in the final report may be used by the NPS for cultural resource management purposes. Information collected during the research project, however, may be used by permittees in other publications that can be copyrighted. However, the permittee must not publish, without the prior permission of the regional director, any locational or other identifying archeological site information that could compromise the

government's protection and management of archeological sites (Permit, Standard Permit Conditions 15.x).

Artifact and Document Storage

Artifacts and records from the archeological investigations on federally owned parklands are the property of the United States (43 CFR 7.8). Material remains and associated records must be delivered to the appropriate official of the institution responsible for curation no later than 90 days after the final report is submitted to the regional director (43 CFR 7.8.7).

NPS Managers: Amendment and Extension of Permits

Any significant change in the project after the issuance of the Permit, such as a change in the scope of the investigation, replacement of the Principal Investigator, or change in the curatorial facility, requires an amendment to the Permit. The permittee is responsible for notifying the regional director in writing of changes and for requesting amendments to the Permit. The permittee risks suspension or revocation of the original Permit, as well as permission to carry out the research project, if the regional director is not notified of changes and a Permit amendment is not issued.

When the terms of the fieldwork component of the Permit have been met and the permittee requests an extension of time, the Permit may be extended for proper cause. The request for an extension must be submitted to the regional director in writing and must include a detailed explanation for the failure to complete the project in the time allotted by the Permit. The regional director reviews the request. If an extension is approved, the regional director will issue an amended Permit with revised dates for project completion.

NPS Managers: Enforcement, Suspension, Revocation of Permits

Regional directors are responsible for enforcing Permits and have the authority to suspend or terminate a Permit (for enforcement of Permits issued under ARPA, see 43 CFR 7.10, Suspension and Revocation of Permits). Regional directors rely on information provided to them by park managers, who have responsibility for monitoring cultural resource activities on parklands.

In the event of a suspension or revocation of a Permit, the regional director sends a notice to the permittee, stating the nature of and reason for suspension or revocation.

A Permit may be suspended by the regional director for the following reasons:

- The NPS finds that the permittee failed to meet any of the terms and conditions of the Permit or has violated any of its prohibitions (43 CFR 7.10 (a) 1).
- Continuation of the permitted work conflicts with decisions regarding park management that were not in effect when the Permit was issued (43 CFR 7.10 (b)).

The project may continue when the terms of the Permit have been met or when the conflict has been resolved.

A Permit may be revoked by the regional director for the following reasons:

- The permittee is convicted of a civil or criminal infraction under Section 6 of ARPA or assessed a civil penalty under Section 7 of ARPA (16 U.S.C. 470ee).
- The permittee fails to correct the situation for which a Permit was suspended (43 CFR 7.10 (a) 2).
- Continuation of the permitted work conflicts with decisions regarding park management that were not in effect when the Permit was issued (43 CFR 7.10 (b)).

NPS Managers: Appeals, Reviews, and Disputes

Any affected person may request a review by the Department of the Interior Departmental Consulting Archeologist (DCA) of any professional issues involved in a bureau permitting decision, such as professional qualifications, research design, or other professional archeological matters. The DCA makes a final professional recommendation to the Director of the NPS to consider in making a final decision about the adjudication of the matter (43 CFR 7.36).

Any affected person, an applicant or permittee, may appeal a denial, modification, suspension, revocation, or the inclusion of specific terms and conditions of a Permit to the regional director. The disputant may appeal a regional director's appeal decision to the Director of the NPS. (Further guidance on appeals and disputes may be found at 43 CFR 7.11 & 7.36 (a)-(c).)

The regional director's decision shall stand during the appeals process. The NPS Director's decision is the final administrative decision on appeals.

NPS Managers: Enforcement of ARPA on Parklands

Civil Penalties Provisions of ARPA

The regional director may assess a civil penalty for violation of the terms of the Permit (16 U.S.C. 470ff). The maximum amount of the penalty is based on the commercial or archeological value of the archeological resources involved in the violation, plus the costs of restoration and repair of such resources. For a second, or subsequent violation, the maximum penalty is double the full costs (43 CFR 7.16 (a)(1)&(2)). Under ARPA, the regional director may assess a penalty amount that is less than the maximum amount of the penalty and to mitigate or remit the penalty (43 CFR 7.16(b)).

In addition to civil penalties for Permit violations, the regional director may assess civil penalties against persons who, regardless of whether the action was intentional or accidental, violate any prohibitions contained in ARPA and ARPA regulations (and see 43 CFR 7.15 & 7.4). In order to prevail in a civil penalty assessment, the NPS need only prove its case by a preponderance of the evidence, rather than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard required in a criminal prosecution. The regional director may use both civil penalty assessment and criminal prosecution to address the same prohibited conduct.

Criminal Penalties Provisions of ARPA

In the NPS, responsibility for the criminal enforcement of ARPA has been delegated to NPS law enforcement personnel ([DO#9 Law Enforcement Program](#)). Law enforcement personnel confer with park staff to determine whether circumstances of Permit violations warrant assessment of civil penalties or whether to refer cases to the U.S. Attorney's office for criminal prosecution.

A criminal violation is either a Class A misdemeanor or a felony. If either the commercial value or the archeological value of the archeological resource involved in the offense plus the cost of restoration and repair of the archeological resource exceeds \$500, the crime is a felony. If the total amount is \$500 or less, the crime is a misdemeanor. A second or subsequent ARPA offense is automatically a felony. The penalties section of ARPA is at [16 U.S.C. 470ee\(d\)](#). The maximum fines prescribed in ARPA for criminal offenses have been superceded by [18 U.S.C. 3571](#). Sentences of imprisonment for ARPA criminal violations are guided by [U.S. Sentencing Guidelines 2B1.5](#). Theft of, Damage to, or Destruction of, Cultural Heritage Resources; Unlawful Sale, Purchase, Exchange, Transportation, or Receipt of Cultural Heritage Resources, but may not exceed the statutory limits.

ARPA provides for the forfeiture of all archeological resources that were the object of an ARPA violation, as well as vehicles and equipment that were used in connection with the violation ([16 U.S.C. 470gg\(b\)](#)).

NPS Managers: Storing Permit Records

Archeological investigations on parklands are an important component of the history of a park, and the information gained from the investigations often contribute to fulfilling the park's management plans. Information about the number of applications received and number of Permits issued is included in the [Secretary's Report to Congress on the Federal Archeology Program](#).

Applications for Permits, copies of correspondence, Permit documents, and final reports document research on parklands. Regional director's offices and park managers maintain complete Permit files under filing code [A9015](#). Per the NPS records schedule, these records are to be maintained indefinitely at the park. The regional director assigns a unique identification number to each permit, and uses this number to organize associated correspondence. The identification number is based on the year of issuance, the park acronym, and the sequential number of permits issued (year/acronym/number).

Regional directors offices or the park managers should coordinate to ensure that the Archeology Program, Washington Office has information on the final report to enter into the National Archeological Database, Reports module (NADB-Reports). NADB-Reports is a national bibliographic database on archeological investigations across the United States, focusing primarily on the archeological gray literature. Further information about submitting the information, including the citation form, may be found on the Archeology Program's [NADB website](#).

NPS Managers: Treasure Trove

Treasure trove usually consists of gold or silver in the form of coin, plate, bullion, or negotiable currency that is hidden and whose origin is not known. Treasure trove is often buried in soil or submerged lands or concealed elsewhere. Park managers consult park archeologists and other cultural resource staff regarding the identity of treasure trove.

Assistance in responding to real or potential treasure trove issues is available from the Chief Archeologist.

Requests to search for treasure trove

Individuals, organizations, and businesses that make requests to parks to search for treasure trove should be advised that NPS policy does not normally allow searching for treasure trove on parklands. Treasure trove discovered on federally-owned parklands remains federal property. Individuals who wish to pursue the matter further should contact GSA for information on submitting an application for treasure trove investigations. The contact address is: **Director, Property Management Division, General Services Administration, 1901 South Bell Street, Arlington, VA 22202-4502** by mail.

The potential applicant should not proceed with any search activities on parklands without first obtaining the required permissions, authorizations, Permits, and contracts, otherwise they risk violating applicable Federal laws and regulations.

Upon receipt of a completed application, GSA forwards the application to the Associate Director, Cultural Resources, inquiring whether the location of the alleged treasure is on lands under NPS jurisdiction and, if so, whether the Associate Director grants the applicant permission to conduct the proposed activities. The Associate Director, in consultation with the NPS Chief Archeologist, will determine whether to grant permission for treasure trove activities, and will notify GSA accordingly.

Inadvertent discovery of treasure trove

When NPS staff learn that potential treasure trove objects have been discovered on parklands, the park manager and/or a law enforcement officer immediately takes custody of the objects and secures the area where the objects were found. The park manager and the law enforcement officer obtain as much information as possible about the circumstances of discovery. The information facilitates identification of the objects as authentic treasure trove, lost or abandoned property whose owner is known, other type of government property, or an archeological resource (and, therefore, possible cultural resources law violation). The park manager or law enforcement officer inventories the property taken into custody and gives the finder receipts for the property, as necessary.

All abandoned property brought to the attention of the park by the finder is recorded on a Lost and Found Report (NPS Form 10-166).

The regional director is notified of the discovery of treasure trove as soon as possible. The regional director notifies the Associate Director, Cultural Resources of the incident within 3 working days. The Associate Director subsequently notifies GSA, as necessary.